

District Councillor Report – Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye, February 2023

Home Improvements to save energy

Retrofitting is the term for making changes to existing buildings to reduce energy use and carbon dioxide emissions. It can also save you money in the long term.

The benefits:

- A more efficient home which will be warmer, cheaper to run and less draughty
- Investing in energy efficient home improvements may cost more upfront but will save you money over its lifetime
- A better Energy Performance Certificate rating, which is likely to increase the value of your property.

Examples of retrofitting include:

- Insulating roofs, walls and floors
- Replacing windows
- Improving ventilation or draught proofing
- Installing efficient heating and hot water systems
- Installing renewable energy e.g. solar panels.

There are grants available for doing this to your home if you fulfil certain criteria. You may have had a leaflet through your door recently about this.

We have dedicated some pages on our website on this topic with links to grants and organisations that can help. If you are considering some home improvements, take a look at these and see how you can add energy efficiency to your project:

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/tackling-the-climate-emergency/what-can-you-do/retrofitting-your-home/>

Compulsory ID to vote in elections

More information on this is here: <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/local-democracy-and-elections/elections-and-voting/new-for-2023-you-will-need-to-show-photo-id-when-voting-at-a-polling-station/>

If you don't already have an accepted form of photo ID, or you're not sure whether your photo ID still looks like you, you can apply for a free

voter ID document, known as a **Voter Authority Certificate**. You can apply for this at voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk.

Alternatively, you can complete a paper application form and send this to the electoral services team at your local council.

The deadline to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate for the local elections in England on 4th May 2023 is 5pm on Tuesday 25th April.

Half Term Fun at The Cornerstone

Half term is fast approaching, and Cornerstone Arts Centre has plenty to keep the family entertained.

For those with children interested in getting crafty, **Decorate Your Own Bird House on Wednesday 15th February** at 11am will have children designing an exciting new home for local wildlife just in time for spring to arrive. This one-off workshop is aimed at children in key stage 1 (5-6 year-olds) and is £10 with all materials provided to get creative.

Or book tickets to see the crowd pleaser Quentin Blake's Mister Magnolia on **Sunday 19th February at 2pm**. This show is full of colourful characters, live music, puppetry, and audience interaction inspired by the incredible work of the illustrator Quentin Blake.

Head to the [**Cornerstone website**](#) to find out more.

Great British Spring Clean

This year we'll again be supporting the Keep Britain Tidy Great British Spring Clean by loaning litter pickers, high-viz jackets and bags to community litter picking groups and individuals. The event runs from Monday 17th March to Sunday 2nd April.

Equipment can be booked by completing and returning the booking form and declaration document to [**waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk**](mailto:waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk). The forms are available on our South litter picking pages.

Homes for Refugees

SODC's Housing Team has one of the best track records in the country for reducing homelessness (as reported in our Quarterly Performance Management Reports) and is putting its expertise to good use in finding accommodation for refugees as well.

Now that many Ukrainian visitors are reaching the end of their initial six-month stays with local families, some are having to find new homes and the Housing Team is working hard on this challenge.

We are also expecting to receive further funding from central government shortly to purchase accommodation on the open market for this purpose, to reduce the cost of temporary hotel accommodation.

There are several benefits to this approach (which we had started to deploy in any case with our own limited funds) because we are able to ensure these homes are energy-efficient and of an appropriate quality as well as benefiting from rental payments and adding to our own eventual housing stock.

In the meantime, monthly payments to hosts of Ukrainian guests have increased to £550 over the winter and we are still keen to hear from anyone willing to provide accommodation to families in need; any enquiries can be directed to the SODC Community Hub – www.southoxon.gov.uk/ukraine

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Consultation

The Government is asking people for their views on their proposed approach to updating the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

The policies set out in the NPPF apply to the preparation of **Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans** and to decisions on planning applications. The NPPF covers a wide range of topics including: housing, business, economic development, transport and the natural environment.

To find out more, visit the **Government's consultation webpage**. The consultation **closes on 2nd March 2023**.

Leisure needs survey

We have appointed Stuart Todd Associates to undertake two studies to support the work on our **Joint Local Plan**, the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and the Leisure Facilities Assessment and Strategy (LFAS). The two studies will help provide updated guidance and evidence of leisure needs in both South and Vale.

As part of the work Stuart Todd Associates and the National Governing Bodies are writing to sports clubs, **parish councils** and local organisations to find out more about the leisure provision in the districts.

Please can I encourage anyone who is contacted to respond to the survey.

To contact me:

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